

CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1. A method of managing travel within a sponsoring organization, comprising:

receiving a travel request submitted for a group member of the sponsoring organization;

5 identifying travel information from at least one vendor authorized by the sponsoring organization, wherein the travel information includes financial rates previously established between the vendor and the sponsoring organization;

10 automatically comparing the identified travel information to alternative travel information, the alternative travel information including available financial rates offered through at least one alternative internet-based source; and

15 selecting travel information from the comparing step for reservation for the group member.

2. The method of claim 1, further including the step of providing group member information, wherein the travel itinerary is constructed based at least in part on the group member information.

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3. The method of claim 2, wherein the group member information includes information relating to at least one of the group member's (1) seating preference, (2) frequent flier information and (3) meal preference.

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4. The method of claim 2, wherein the group member information is obtained from the website of the vendor.

5. The method of claim 1, further comprising the step of providing a comparative analysis to the group member, the comparative analysis identifying the alternative travel information identified by the comparing step.

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6. The method of claim 5, wherein the at least one vendor provides services related to at least one of (1) airline services, (2) ground transportation and (3) room accommodation.

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7. The method of claim 6, wherein the travel itinerary includes airline services based on a previously established financial rate.

8. The method of claim 7, wherein the travel itinerary includes ground transportation based on a previously established financial rate.

9. The method of claim 8, wherein the travel itinerary includes room accommodation based on a previously established financial rate.

10. The method of claim 1, further comprising the step of reserving the travel itinerary over the internet.

11. The method of claim 1, further including the step of providing venue information about a specific venue for which the group member is making travel arrangements.

12. The method of claim 9, wherein the venue information includes information relating to at least one of (1) a date on which an event begins, (2) a date on which an event ends and (3) the location of the event.

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13. A system for managing travel within a sponsoring organization, comprising a computer configured to:

- process a travel request inputted for a group member of the sponsoring organization;
- 5 access a database containing identified travel information from at least one vendor authorized by the sponsoring organization in response to the inputted travel request, wherein the travel information includes financial rates previously established between the vendor
- 10 and the sponsoring organization;
- compare the identified travel information to alternative travel information, the alternative travel information including available financial rates offered through an alternative internet-based source;
- 15 select travel information based upon the comparison for reservation for the group member; and
- reserve a travel itinerary over the internet for the group member.

14. The system of claim 13, wherein the computer is further configured to display the travel itinerary on a display.

15. The system of claim 14, wherein the display is selected from the group consisting of (1) a personal computer, (2) a cell phone and (3) a personal digital assistant.

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16. The system of claim 13, wherein the additional travel information includes rates that have not been previously established.

17. The system of claim 16 wherein the computer is configured to select the lower of the previously established financial rate and the non-previously established financial rate.

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18. The system of claim 13, wherein the group member information is accessed from the database.

19. A machine readable program containing instructions for controlling a device for managing travel within a sponsoring organization, comprising:

5 means for receiving a travel request submitted for a group member of the sponsoring organization;

means for identifying travel information from at least one vendor authorized by the sponsoring organization, wherein the travel information includes financial rates previously established between the vendor and the sponsoring organization;

10 means for automatically comparing the identified travel information to alternative travel information, the alternative travel information including available financial rates offered through at least one alternative internet-based source; and

means for selecting travel information from the comparison for reservation for the group member.

20. The machine readable program of 19, wherein the program is configured to automatically reserve a travel itinerary over the internet for the group member.